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ABSTRACT

Time of final vote decision in a national presidential election campaign was explored as the dependent variable in a media effects study conducted earlier as part of the National Election Study of 1980. Political identity, a new measure of partisanship and independence known as the Partisan Supporter Typology, was used as an important contingent condition for political communication effects. Hierarchical regression was used to assess the relative contribution of political identity, other political predispositional factors, and media use in the time voting decisions were made. Results indicated that most of the explained variance at the time of final vote decision could be explained by political identity and predispositional variables, such as political activity and caring which party wins the election. (Author/DF)

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Political identity, time of final vote decision and media use in the 1980 presidential election

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Abstract

Political identity, time of final vote decision and media use in the 1980 presidential election

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Time of final vote decision in a national presidential election campaign is studied as the dependent variable in this media effects study. Political identity, a new measure of partisanship and independence known as the Partisan Supporter Typology, is used as an important contingent condition for political communication effects. Hierarchical regression is used to assess the relative contribution of political identity, other political predispositional factors, and media use in the time voting decisions are made. Results indicate that most of the explained variance in time of final vote decision is explained by political identity and predispositional variables such as political activity and caring which party wins the election.

How individuals use mass media in the context of election campaigns is one of the oldest questions in the relatively young field of mass communication research. In the classic voting studies of the 1940s and 1950s, direct, powerful media effects on voting behavior were not found, leading to the widespread conclusion that media had at most limited effects on voters. (See Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet, 1944; and Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee, 1954.) These limited effects were also believed to be confined primarily to reinforcement of existing voting tendencies based primarily on demographic or social predictors (Klapper, 1960).

Voters were generally considered members of one of two groups, neither of which was expected to be powerfully affected by media messages. The first group, early deciders, included those with strong partisan ties and a great deal of interest in and knowledge about politics. These qualities were thought sufficient to preclude media effects, since the people in this category could make decisions based on precampaign decision cues such as their ideology and partisanship. The second group was thought to comprise the remainder of the voters, who seemingly made up their minds at the last minute.

Work by a number of researchers in recent years has challenged this limited effects model. (See Becker, McCombs and McLeod, 1975). Two researchers, Chaffee and Choe (1980) have argued for significant effects of the mass media on a group they call campaign deciders. As identified by Chaffee and Choe, these people are generally those with low partisanship, low ideology and who have adopted media use strategies during campaigns that will help them gain enough information to make informed decisions. (See Goldman and Whitney, 1981, for a replication of Chaffee and Choe.)

Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet (1944:55) described the connection between time of final vote decision and political interest as follows:

The author acknowledges the interest and helpful comments of Dr. Steven H. Chaffee.

> They felt not much was at stake and waited for happenstance or friends to make up their minds for them. As the campaign moves on, the respondents who answered 'don't know' were also saying, in effect, 'don't care.'

These late deciders were also considered to be those most likely to be persuaded by personal contact, as the above quotation implies.

Chaffee and Choe (1980) in their study of the 1976 presidential campaign with a Wisconsin sample, identified not two groups of deciders, but three. These included the early, or precampaign deciders, campaign deciders and last-minute deciders. The groups were found to be different on a number of variables related to the type of decision the person was expected to make. For example, early deciders, not yet having access to the actual campaign or campaign communications, seem capable of making up their minds based on their partisan predispositions and other cues available before the start of the campaign.

Campaign deciders seem to lack partisanship to a large extent, but do seem to make use of campaign communication and to form their decisions largely on the basis of this information. Last-minute deciders, who seem to lack most other decisionmaking cues, vote on the basis of weak partisan ties, and are generally not as well understood in their decisionmaking process.

This is not to imply that they are not an important group. Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet (1944: 55-6) manage to convey a sense of both puzzlement and frustration with this group:

> Campaign managers were continually faced with the task of propagandizing not only a steadily shrinking segment of the electorate, but also a segment whose interest in and concern with the election also steadily shrank. By the end of the campaign, the managers were exerting their greatest efforts to catch the few votes of the least interested and least involved persons.

In recent elections, however, these late deciders have been of critical importance to campaign managers and candidates. In the 1980 election, for example, voter volatility was so high and so many persons decided in the last three days of the campaign that many pre-election polls appeared to be wrong. Indeed, the only

published poll that correctly predicted a Reagan victory had done so by continued polling through the final weekend before the vote. (See Abramson, Aldrich and Rohde, 1983: 54-56, for a discussion of this phenomenon.)

From this brief discussion it is apparent that partisanship has been linked closely to time of final vote decision. In addition, several authors have noted the number of campaign deciders has increased in recent elections. Closely associated with this trend is the decline in partisanship and the corresponding increase in the number of people who prefer to label themselves as independents (Nie, Verba and Petrocik, 1979; Dennis, 1980).

Partisanship and independence

The general notion of partisan identification that has dominated the mainstream scientific study of political behavior in the United States and other industrial democracies since the 1950s is that individuals in the electorate are said to form a "long-term psychological attachment or feeling of loyalty to a political party that develops during childhood and becomes more intense the longer one is identified with that party" (Asher, 1984:51). Party identification, then, represents a preference for one party over another and is most useful in predicting vote choice. Over the past 30 years party identification has become the centerpiece of modern theories of voting behavior.

The concept of party identification was developed primarily through a series of national voting studies at the University of Michigan (See Campbell, Gurin and Miller, 1954; and Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes, 1960; for the development of this literature.) Throughout this development, scant attention was devoted to the problem of independents, people who did not fit neatly into the party identification conceptualization. What comments there were followed directly from the emerging party identification theory, which indicated that independents must be neutral partisans or perhaps closet partisans. (See Wattenberg, 1984; or Kosicki and Pettey, 1985; for a more thorough discussion of this matter.)

Independents who could not be classified as leaning closer to one party or the other were either glorified as theoretical ideal types or relegated to a kind of interior status due to their low level of political knowledge and political interest.

Discussing the popular civics explanation of independence, Campbell, Converse Miller and Stokes (1960:143) noted that:

> The ideal of the independent citizen, attentive to politics, concerned with the course of government, who weighs the rival appeals of a campaign and reaches a judgment that is unswayed by partisan prejudice, has had such a vigorous history in the tradition of political reform...that one could easily suppose that the habitual partisan has the more limited interest and concern with politics.

However, the actual picture of independent voters that emerged from the Michigan electoral surveys presented a much different picture:

> Far from being more attentive, interested and informed, Independents tend as a group to be somewhat less involved in politics. They have a somewhat poorer knowledge of the issues, and their image of the candidates is fainter, their interest in the campaign is less, their concern over the outcome is relatively slight, and their choice between competing candidates, although it is made later in the campaign, seems less to spring from discoverable evaluations of the elements of national politics (p. 143).

This discrepancy raises at least two fundamental questions. The first is the overall appropriateness of considering independents as neutral partisans on a single dimension running from Strong Republican to Strong Democrat. A number of political scientists have questioned this unidimensionality in recent years, primarily because of discrepancies in the ordering typically used. For example, Petrocik (1974) noted that ordering partisans as Strong Republican, Weak Republican, Independent Republican, Independent, Independent Democrat, Weak Democrat or Strong Democrat implies a strong, consistent order to the categories. However, he found independent party leaners (Independent Democrats and Republicans) were more likely to be involved and interested in politics than the weak partisan supporters. This problem, and others pointed out by such writers as Asher (1984), Katz (1979), Weisberg (1980, 1983), Howell (1980), Valentine and Van Wingen (1980) and DeVries

and Tarrance (1972), cast serious doubt about the adequacy of the traditional seven-point party identification measure. Not only does the measure fail to account adequately for independents, it also can be misleading in terms of partisan strength. (See Kosicki and Pettey, 1985; for a more thorough development of this point.)

The second problem raised by the discrepant views of independents in the literature is our assumption that independents are somehow all similar to each other, and that one of the two views must be correct. However, several notions of independence have been in the literature for many years. The first involves the type of independent described by The American Voter surveys. Wattenberg (1984) has called these people fundamentally unattached from politics and claims they are not interested enough in politics to have a firmly held image of a "party" that they can be independent from.

A second type of independent is the ideal, League of Women Voters, civics-book type, interested in politics, but simply non-partisan. Yet a third type, described by Dennis (1980) and others, involves those partisans who express feelings of independence from their party of choice primarily over differences of candidate choice or issue policies. These types of independents cannot be detected by the standard seven-point party identification measure.

A new measure of partisanship

Weisberg (1980) and Dennis (1980, 1981a, 1981b, 1983) have demonstrated that independence and partisanship are separate dimensions of political behavior, and that when allowed to do so, a substantial number of voters will claim to be both partisan and independent. They have shown conclusively that The American Voter view of independents as conforming to a single imaginary stereotype is misleading and inadequate to represent modern political reality.

To better understand the concepts of independence and party identification, it will be necessary to think in terms of an individual's "political identity" being along two dimensions: independence and partisanship. Dennis has investigated a measurement scale known as the Partisan Supporter Typology series (PST), which treats partisanship and independence as independent dimensions of an individual's political identity. For the present study, a simple, four-fold typology will be used, since our discussion so far has centered on strength of partisanship and orientations to political parties in general, and not to specific interparty differences.

The present research

This paper attempts to relate two distinct lines of research, that dealing with time of final vote decision in the media effects tradition, and the emerging literature on political identity. Political identity will be treated as a two-dimensional concept as suggested by Dennis (1980) and Weisberg (1980). This typology has a number of conceptual advantages. It allows a more precise evaluation of the notion of political independence, which is becoming increasingly important in American politics as traditional party identification erodes or undergoes dealignment or realignment. Also, since Chaffee and Choe (1980) have noted that media researchers should expect greatest political communication effects among independent voters, it may be useful to investigate the various types of independents as outlined in other contexts by Dennis and discussed above. These include persons who are unattached from politics, those who are regular independents, and those who claim to be both independent and partisan supporters.

The ability of the Partisan Supporter Typology to identify the unattached voters is a major advance, since they seem to be closer to the group The American Voter describes as independents -- low in media use and interpersonal discussion about politics. Regular independents, according to Dennis, are those who are moderately

interested and knowledgeable about politics but who happen to reject, for one reason or another, the legitimacy or the efficacy of parties. Independent partisan supporters are perhaps best thought of as the attentive public for politics, being high in interest, and high in the use of political media. These knowledgeable voters tend to cite policy disagreements with the parties as reasons for also claiming to be independent. (See Dennis, 1980; and Kosicki and Pettey, 1985.)

These categories, plus regular partisans, are viewed as contingent orientations that should lead to differential media effects, in this case, time of final vote decision. Chaffee and Choe (1980) found independence related to increased campaign communication use. They also found that independents (using a traditional seven-point scale of partisanship that was "folded" over on itself to measure strength of partisanship) were more likely than others to make their vote decision during the campaign period.

Chaffee and Choe were primarily interested in discriminating groups of persons who made their decisions at different times of the campaign year. The present study, in contrast, views the decision time as an important outcome of media and political orientation interactions. The implication of this line of argument is that variance in the time of final vote decision can be explained contingent upon political identity, various other political predispositions, and media use.

Each group discussed above, the unattached, the independents, independent partisans and regular partisans, is expected to have a mean time of decision associated with it. Furthermore, it ought to be possible to obtain better prediction by taking into account other political behaviors such as frequency of political activities, interest in the campaign, and caring about the outcome of the election in terms of party.

In general, one expects these political predispositions other than political identity to predict to earlier decision times. This is consistent with both The American Voter view and The People's Choice. The stronger one's political orientations

are (and these are developed by political experience and activity) the more anchored one's political perceptions and choices are.

Media present quite a different set of problems in terms of time of decision, in that communication itself can either be a force that delays or facilitates decisionmaking. Goldman and Whitney (1981) talk about a group of strategic deciders who seem to wait until all available information is in before deciding, while others, as discussed by Chaffee and Choe, use communication as a definite aid in decisionmaking during the campaign period once they have learned enough about the candidates.

The model proposed here is an interactive one. That is, it suggests that non-directional vote decisions will be the outcomes of political identity, political predispositions and media use interacting. This is consistent with a transactional approach to the study of media effects where interactions are investigated carefully for hints about media influence.

Methods

The data for this study were gathered by the Center for Political Studies at the University of Michigan as part of the National Election Study of 1980.* The Major Panel file contains data gathered from a sample of 1,008 respondents

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*The data for this paper were made available by the Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research. The author bears sole responsibility for all interpretations made in the paper. Special thanks also go to the Data and Program Library Service at the University of Wisconsin-Madison for providing codebooks and data files.

interviewed at four time points throughout the year. A preprimary wave of 1,008 was conducted between January 22 and February 25. The same persons were recontacted at the end of the primary season between June 4 and July 13. Panel mortality reduced the sample to 843 persons for wave 2. Respondents were recontacted a third time in September, in a post-convention/pre-election wave. Interviews were taken with 769 persons in the September wave. A post-election wave was also questioned between November 5 and November 25. This yielded 764 respondents. The full documentation for the data, including response rates, sampling information and other study design characteristics are fully documented in Miller (1983).

Measurement: Time of final vote decision.

Time of final vote decision, the major deperdent variable of interest, was assessed in two ways. The first method is a self-report measure in which respondents were asked to report the time they finally decided to vote the way they did in the election. The answers were coded into 11 categories corresponding to critical campaign events during the year, such as "before the Republican convention" or "after the Reagan-Anderson debate." This retrospective self-report measure has a number of potential problems similar to that experienced by other researchers examining retrospective recall of party identification. Chaffee and Choe (1978) also noted a similar problem in assessing time of final vote decision in the three data sets they used to examine the question. They found a tendency to report earlier times than panel validation methods indicate. (See Dalton, Flanagan and Beck, 1984:154-158 for a discussion of self-report vs. panel validation of party identification indices.)

Time of final vote decision was also assessed with an unobtrusive measure by working backwards from the final reported vote choice in wave 4 to determine how early in the year the individual had expressed the same choice and remained consistent in it through to Election Day. This method, similar to the one used

in Chaffee and Choe (1980) involves checking respondents' reported vote preferences at each previous wave in response to a question asking who the respondent would vote for if the election were held that day.

The two measures correlate only moderately (Pearson's r=.38, n=547). An examination of the crosstabulations of the two measures indicated a substantial number of error cases, that is, cases that were classified as early deciders on one measure and as late deciders on another. Both measures were used to recode the values into a third measure of time of final vote decision. This third measure will be the dependent variable in subsequent analyses. The new variable was created by assigning relatively more weight to the unobtrusive panel assessment method, and the correlation between the new derived measure and the panel validation measure is relatively high (r=.71). An examination of the correlations between the third method and the panel method for each PST subgroup yielded the following correlations:

PST1 Unattached r = .70
PST2 Independents r = .78
PST3 Independent Partisans r = .61
PST4 Regular Partisans r = .65

These correlations indicate the degree to which an individual's self-report time of decision answer correspondents to the unobtrusive, or panel, measure. The unattached and the regular independents are most likely to have scores that agree, while the greatest discrepancies occur for the independent partisans and the regular partisans.

Measurement: Independent variables.

A number of demographic, political interest, knowledge and media use variables were selected from different waves of the survey instrument. These were chosen for descriptive and theoretical reasons as they were expected to show differences among the PST groups and in some instances, help predict time of final vote decision. Attempts were made to assess differences in the variables

across time as reflected in the various waves. When the measures seemed relatively constant across time, they were summed to increase the reliability of the resulting composite measure. A list of variables with their reliabilities appears in Appendix A.

Measurement: Political identity

Political identity is assessed using the Partisan Supporter Typology series of questions. These questions grew out of a concern by many in the political science community in the late 1970s that party identification and political independence are not unidimensional concepts but rather multi-dimensional. (See Dennis, 1983; Dennis, 1981a; Dennis, 1981b; Weisberg, 1980; and Weisberg, 1983 for a review of these concerns and reports on the PST series.)

Table 1 displays the questions used to assess political identity and the distribution among the four categories from wave 1. When given the opportunity to do so, 16.4 percent of respondents will choose to be <u>both</u> independent and partisan supporters, and 27.9 percent will choose to be neither independents nor party identifiers. Partisans, a category that includes both traditional Republicans and Democrats, comprise 29.5 percent of the sample, and 26.3 percent consider themselves independents.

The PST measure of political identity in its four-fold breakdown, is akin to a folded measure of partisanship, but, of course, includes other categories. The measure is used strictly as a categorical variable with no ordering intended. In subsequent analyses, the discrete groups will be entered into multiple regression analyses as three dummy variables.

Analysis

Several types of analyses were performed. Multiple t-tests were performed on the mean values of the various measures above broken down by PST groups and

time of decision groups. The results for the PST subgroups are reported in Table 2. Results of the time of decision (panel method) subgroups were disappointing in that few significant differences were found. The results will be discussed in the next section, but they were not tabled.

Factor analyses as discussed in the Appendix for the candidate knowledge issues were also conducted. Factor analyses identified two dimensions of candidate knowledge -- knowledge of the better-known candidates and knowledge of the more obscure candidates.

Correlations were computed between the independent variables and both the time of decision measures, the ones derived from the panel method and the combined measure. These correlations appear in Table 3.

Finally, hierarchical multiple regression was used to regress time of decision (combined measure) on various political, predispositional, media and interaction variables. These regressions appear in Tables 4, 5 and 6, where standard regression statistics are included, along with R^2 adjusted for chance.[1] This correction for chance is particularly important in models with many variables such as the models included here, particularly since multiplicative terms to represent interaction effects are being added to the model. The interaction terms were computed by first standardizing the quantitative variables and then multiplying them together as shown in Tables 5 and 6. This is the general procedure recommended by Cohen and Cohen (1983). (See also Draper and Smith, 1981:247-250 for a section on dummy variables in interaction terms.)

Results

Table 2 contains the results of multiple t-tests examining the means of the independent variables subdivided by PST groups. As expected, the unattached are generally the lowest on knowledge, campaign activities of all kinds, and media use for government and political news. From examing these means in comparison to the

other subgroups, a consistent picture emerges of the unattached as moderately young (mean age = 41), with relatively low education and an income level somewhat lower than that of the regular independents and the independent partisans. They are remarkably low on knowledge of minor candidates and very unlikely to be involved in political activities. Their time of decision scores are close to average.

Regular independents are even younger than the unattached (mean age=38) and a relatively high amount of education (standard score = +.31). Like the unattached, the regular independents don't seem to care much which party wins the election (-.37), but are quite knowledgeable about both obscure and well-known candidates and seem to devote about an average amount of time and effort to media about politics and government. They also have the distinction of being the latest deciders in the analysis, using either measure.

The regular partisans are distinguished by being the ones who care most which party wins the election (+67) and are quite moderate in their knowledge of lesser-known candidates (+37) and well-known candidates (-.07). They tend to be the older respondents (50 years) and slightly below the mean (-.19) on education. The partisans are the earliest group to decide using both measures of time of decision, (-24, panel; -37, combined scale). They are also quite high on the use of media for political and governmental matters, although not quite as high as the indpendent partisans.

The independent partisans are about average on time of decision (.07 and -.08), and age. On most other things they are remarkably above the mean, and on many things such as campaign interest (+.50) campaign discussion (.56), knowledge of lesser-known candidates (+1.07), knowledge of better-known candidates (+.50), attention to news about politics (+.42) and TV attention to political news (.40), they are the highest subgroup. They are, in short, well-educated, knowledgeable and concerned about politics. While they have strong political preferences, they do not readily identify wholeheartedly with a party, and this seems to delay their time of decision.

Table 3 presents correlations between the various political and demographic variables in Table 2 and both measures of time of final vote decision, the panel measure and the combined panel/self-report measure. Note that the two sets are quite similar, with the second set containing one additional significant correlation, that being between age and the combined time measure (r= -.10). The significant correlations are mostly higher by slight amounts for the second measure as well. These characteristics argue well for the validity of the new combined measure in that it behaves quite similarly to the single one, but slightly better.

Table 4 presents a hierarchical regression model regressing the combined time of decision variable on demographic, political identity, political predisposition and media indicators. The resulting equation accounts for 21 percent of the variance in time of decision, and the adjusted R^2 measure is almost as high (.19). An examination of the incremental R^2 column indicates that the two best predictors are being an independent (.06) and caring which political party wins the election (.10). In total, the three dummy variables representing political identity (the PST series) account for 8 percent of the variance. The notable thing about the model is that media, represented here by attention to political news on television, and attention to TV and newspaper news accounts for no variance in the equation beyond that accounted for by control and political variables.

Since the theoretical discussion above postulated interactive effects of media and political identity, two additional models were constructed incorporating interaction terms between newspaper attention and several political variables. Newspaper attention and television attention were entered in separate equations so their effects could be clearly compared.

Table 5 presents a series of five equations designed to measure the contribution of political identity (Eq. 1), the main effects of other political

predispositions (Eq. 2), the main effect of newspaper attention (Eq. 3), the interactive effect of newspaper attention and the five political variables (Eq. 4), and the full model with all main and interactive effects of interest (Eq. 5). This procedure is repeated for TV attention in Table 6.

The results indicate one significant interaction, that of newspaper attention and the unattached group (beta= .14). Because the interaction has a positive sign, it indicates that increased newspaper attention among the unattached voters has the effect of delaying their decision time. Overall, the interactive model does slightly better in predicting time of final vote decision than the main effects model shown in Table 4.

Table 6 likewise shows about 1 percent of additional variance accounted for by TV attention and its interactions with the political variables after the political variables are controlled. Note, however, that while the final betas for both TV and newspaper attention are nonsignificant, TV attention is positive (delaying decisionmaking) and newspaper attention is negative (in the direction of facilitating decisionmaking at an earlier time).

Conclusions and discussion

The analyses presented here provide modest evidence that time of final vote decision can be predicted with moderate success from the political identity groupings. In most of the analyses the typology accounts for about 8 to 9 percent of the variance. This is a notable finding, and it seems to indicate that to some extent, at least, four groups provide information about time of final vote decision. Also, as the literature suggests, other political variables such as caring which political party wins the election, even after controlling on the various types of political identity, produces the most variance explained in all forms of the model. This perhaps suggests that there are dimensions of political involvement clearly not captured in the political identity typology.

Viewing the results from a media effects perspective, however, they are somewhat disappointing. Media are adding only non-significant variance to the solution as main effects and only a single significant interaction that is quite small after main effects are controlled.

We should be careful not to conclude from these tests that media have no important role in explaining time of decision. It is too early for that. Possibly other media variables from other time points in the survey, particularly wave 4, could be used. It might also be useful to disaggregate the media indices and run the variables singularly in the equations.

The lack of media results also needs to be viewed against the general way the media variables are asked in the data set. The response scales are small, often containing only two or three choices. Perhaps more damaging, the key newspaper and TV attention variables are not included in all waves of the study. Furthermore, the times fieldwork is scheduled for appear to represent the "dead times" of the campaign -- preprimary, preconvention, and-post election. Only one wave is fielded during the interesting campaign period (wave 3).

Another factor to consider carefully, particularly to guide future analysis of these data, is the adequacy of the assumption of linearity that has been underlying this analysis to date. Multiple regression as employed here is a strictly linear technique, while Chaffee and Choe stressed the potential curvilinearity of the campaign period. Certainly future analyses should include some consideration of non-linear forms such as polynomial regression or power transformations.

Yet, for the moment, it probably makes more sense to look at the results for what they do show. With only a few simple variables the equations account solidly for 20 percent of the variance. These models also include few of the predictors Chaffee and Choe (1980) found most valuable -- image and issue discrimination. These are priority items to add to the analysis as more complex

models of this process are developed. And even without these variables, the present models are accounting for nearly as much variance as Chaffee and Choe (1980) explained in their two sets of discriminant analysis. They accounted for 23 percent of the variance between early deciders and all others in the analyses, and 21 percent of the variance between campaign deciders and last-minute deciders.

This study has tried to combine concepts from two distinct literatures together -- time of decision and a novel measure of partisanship or political identity. The data have been national in scope and the time frame has been dramatically expanded to cover an entire year-long campaign period instead of the period between the convention and the election studied by Chaffee and Choe. A major attribute of scientific research is supposed to be replication of findings. While this study tries to do more than that, it does directly build on the foundation established by earlier work.

Another nagging question remains -- that of the exact role of a study such as this in helping to understand communication in presidential campaigns. The study is too broadly conceptualized to be of immediate use to applied political campaign strategists. Furthermore, it deals with a campaign that is rapidly fading into memory.

A single study, no matter how comprehensive, cannot give us all the answers we seek. But general concepts, studied over many campaigns, may give us the general understanding of important processes we seek to understand.

Notes

1. Marascuilo and Levin (1983·97) explain that although it is a common practice to test R^2 against zero, a more appropriate test is against chance, since the more predictor variables included in a regression equation, the larger R^2 can be expected to be. They give the following formula for R^2 adjusted for chance:

$$\hat{R}_c^2 = 1 - (1 - \hat{R}^2)\left(\frac{N - 1}{N - P - 1}\right)$$

where $\hat{R}_c^2$ represents the corrected-for-chance squared multiple correlation coefficient.

P is the number of predictor variables in the equation.

N is the total sample size.

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Appendix A.

Political Identity

From Wave 3:

1. Now I have a few questions on a different topic.
   In your own mind, do you think of yourself as a supporter of one of the political parties or not?

2. Do you ever think of yourself as a political independent or not?

Time of decision (Time)

1. Self-report from Wave 4:
   How long before the election did you decide that you were going to vote the way you did?
   1. Knew all along, before the primaries.
   2. Before the conventions, as soon as the candidates said they would run.
   3. At the time of the Democratic Convention; when the Democratic candidate was nominated.
   4. During the Republican Convention; when the Republican candidate was nominated.
   5. After the conventions, during the campaign.
   6. After the first debate.
   7. During October
   8. Within two weeks of the election, after the final campaign debate.
   9. In the last few days of the campaign
   10. On election day
   11. Other
   98. Don't know
   99. No answer

2. The unobtrusive measure asked respondents who they would vote for if the election were to be held today.This was asked on all three waves before the election and the responses were compared to the respondent's reported vote choice.
3. Measures 1 and 2 were then combined into a third measure designed to give more weight to the unobtrusive measure and minimize the discrepancies between the two measures.

Reliability for Time (combined measure) = .71

Political activity (ACT)

Political activity is the sum of the following questions, coded 0 for no, 1 for yes.

1. We would like to find out about some things people do to help parties or candidates win an election.
   During the campaign, did you talk to any people and try to show them why they should vote for one of the parties or candidates? 37.3% = Yes
2. Did anyone you know talk to you and try to show you which candidate for president to vote for? 45.5% = Yes
3. Did you go to any political meetings, rallies, fund-raising dinners, or things like that? 7.3% = Yes
4. Did you do any (other) work for one of the parties or candidates? 7.4% = Yes
5. Did you wear a campaign button or put a campaign sticker on your car? 6.5 = Yes
6. Do you belong to any political clubs or organizations? 2.6 percent = Yes

Appendix A (continued)

Campaign interest (CMPINT)

Some people don't pay much attention to campaigns. How about you? Would you say that you are very much interested, somewhat interested, or not much interested in following political campaigns this year. 1= not much 2=somewhat 3 very much

A similar form of this question was asked on all four waves. Summing all four measures yields:

Cronbach's Alpha .83

Campaign talk (TALK)

During the last week or two, have you talked to other people about the candidates or their campaigns? 0=no 1=yes

Cronbach's Alpha .68

Campaign care who wins (CARE)

Generally speaking, would you say that you personally care a good deal which party wins the presidential election this fall, or that you don't care very much which party wins? 0= don't care very much 1= care a good deal

Cronbach's Alpha .73

TVNEWS

How often do you watch the national network news on early evening TV?
Every evening=4
3-4 times/week=3
1-2 times/week=2
less often= 1
never watch= 0
Summed across waves 1,2,3
Cronbach's Alpha .84

TVATT

When you watch national TV news, do you pay a good deal of attention, some attention, or not much attention to news about government and politics?
not much =1
some= 3
great deal = 5
Summed across waves 1,2,3

Cronbach's Alpha .75

NPATT

When you read newspapers, how much attention do you generally pay to news about government and politics?
not much=1
some= 3
great deal = 5 Summed across waves 1,2 Cronbach's Alpha .71

Appendix A (continued)

POLATT

Some people seem to follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there's an election going on or not. Others aren't that interested. Would you say you follow what's going on in government and public affairs,
most of the time=4
some of the time=3
now and then=2
hardly at all=1

Summed across times 1,2,4

Cronbach's Alpha .80

NPEXP1 and NPEXP2

Do you read a newspaper regularly?

KNOW1 KNOW2

For waves 1, 2, and 3, political knowledge was assessed by asking respondents if they had heard of the candidates running for president. Answers were coded 0 if the respondent had never heard of the candidate, 1 if the respondent had heard of the candidate but knew nothing about him, and 2 if the respondent had heard of the candidate and knew something about him. These questions, 11 on wave 1, 12 on wave 2 and 13 on wave 3, were factor analyzed using principal axes, which replaces the ones in the diagonal with communality estimates. The varimax-rotated solution yields two factors per wave, the fist consisting of lesser known candidates, and the second consisting of the better-known ones. Factor scores were saved for each factor for use in subsequent analysis.

Factor scores for the lesser known candidates were summed across waves 1, 2 and 3 to yield a score known as KNOW1, which represents knowledge of lesser-known candidates. KNOW2 was calculated following a similar procedure for the better-known candidates.

For KNOW1, Cronbach's Alpha .87
For KNOW2, Cronbach's Alpha .65

Table 1: Partisan Supporter Typology.

In your own mind, do you think of yourself as a supporter of one of the political parties, or not?

Do you ever think of yourself as a political independent, or not?	Yes	No
Yes	Independent Partisans 16.4% N=156	Regular Independents 26.3% N=251
No	Regular Partisans 29.5% N=281	Unattached 27.9% N=266

N=1008

Table 2: Standardized means of selected variables by political identity.*

	Unattached	Regular Independents	Independent Partisans	Regular Partisans	Grand Mean	Stand. Dev.	1/2	1/3	1/4	2/3	2/4	3/4
CMPINT	-48	-01	50	32	8.87	2.30	c	c	c	c	c	-
TALK	-49	19	56	05	1.54	1.17	c	c	c	c	-	c
CARE	-42	-37	38	67	4.61	1.20	-	c	c	c	c	b
ACT	-87	00	52	18	1.05	1.14	c	c	c	c	-	c
KNOW1	-191	61	107	36	.06	.91	c	c	c	-	-	a
KNOW2	-32	32	50	-07	.02	.87	b	b	-	-	a	a
POLATT	-46	10	42	28	9.44	2.26	c	c	c	b	a	-
TVATT	-47	02	40	27	11.43	3.01	c	c	c	b	b	-
NPATT	-45	-09	32	34	7.13	2.28	b	c	c	b	c	-
AGE	-10	-28	06	40	43.05	17.65	a	-	c	c	c	b
EDUC	-35	31	41	-19	5.75	2.43	c	c	-	-	c	c
FAMINC	-12	19	15	-15	13.82	6.08	b	a	-	-	c	a
TIME (Combined)	10	31	07	-37	5.74	2.98	-	-	c	b	c	a
TIME (panel)	03	29	-08	-24	2.81	.33	a	-	a	b	c	-

a = p<.05
b = p<.01
c = p<.001

*Entries are standard scores, multiplied by 100. Significance tests are standard t-tests.

Table 3: Zero-order correlations between time of final vote decision and other demographic, political and media variables.

	TD	TOFD
CMPINT	-.10*	-.13*
TVATT	-.05	-.08
TVNEWS	-.12*	-.12*
NPATT	-.03	-.08
POLATT	-.06	-.11
TALK	-.06	-.06
CARE	-.29*	-.42*
KNOW1	.01	-.01
KNOW2	.02	-.02
ACTIVITY	-.11*	-.16*
FAMINC	.00	.05
AGE	-.04	-.10*
SEX	-.03	.03
EDUCATION	.00	.06
NPEXP1	.00	-.01
NPEXP2	.03	.00

*Significant at p <.05

TD is panel measure.

TOFD is combined measure.

Table 4: Time of decision regressed on political and media variables.

Variables	r	Beta	R^2	R^2 chg.	Adj. R^2
Age	-.10	.00	.01	.01*	
Education	.06	.04	.01	.00	
Unattached	.06	.05	.05	.01	
Independent	.21	.16	.07	.06*	
Ind. Partisan	-.02	.09	.08	.01*	
Political Activ.	-.16	-.09	.10	.02*	
Care	-.41	-.36	.20	.10*	
Interest	-.25	-.03	.20	.00	
Pol. Att.	-.11	-.05	.20	.00	
NP Attention	-.04	.03	.20	.00	
TV Attention	-.08	.09	.21	.00	.19

*p<.05

Table 5: Hierarchical regression of time of final vote decision on political, newspaper attention and interaction terms. Entries are standardized regression coefficients. (N=484)

	Simple r	Eq. 1	Eq. 2	Eq. 3	Eq. 4	Eq. 5
Unattached	.06	.24*	.04	.04	.05	.04
Independent	.21	.34*	.16*	.16*	.15*	.15*
Ind. Partisan	-.02	.13*	.10*	.10*	.08	.07
Care/party	-.42		-.36*	-.37*	-.37*	-.36*
Pol. Activity	-.16		-.08	-.09*	-.09*	-.08
NP Attention	-.04			.04		-.11
Unattached x NPATT	.07				.08*	.14*
Independent x NPATT	.03				.03	.09
Ind. Part. x NPATT	.00				.06	.10
Care x NPATT	-.12				-.03	.00
Pol. Act x NPATT	-.05				.00	.00
Total R^2		.084	.199	.201	.211	.214
R^2 added		.084*	.125*	.001	.012*	.003
Adjusted R^2		.078	.191	.191	.195	.196

*p<.05

Table 6: Hierarchical regression of time of final vote decision on political, television attention and interaction terms. Entries are standardized regression coefficients. (N=435)

	Simple r	Eq. 1	Eq. 2	Eq. 3	Eq. 4	Eq. 5
Unattached	.06	.24*	.04	.05	.03	.04
Independent	.21	.34*	.16*	.16*	.15*	.16*
Ind. Partisan	-.02	.13*	.10*	.10*	.09	.10
Care/party	-.42		-.37*	-.38*	-.37*	-.38*
Pol. Activity	-.16		-.09	-.10*	-.08	-.09*
TV Attention	-.08			.06		.11
Unattached x TVATT	-.04				.00	-.08
Independent x TVATT	.00				.04	.00
Ind. Partisan x TVATT	-.01				.03	.00
Care x TVATT	-.07				-.06	-.08
Pol. Act x TVATT	-.06				-.01	.00
Total R^2		.084	.199	.203	.206	.209
R^2 added		.084	.125	.006	.006	.005
Adjusted R^2		.078	.191	.193	.187	.188

*p<.05